



# FORESTS OF INLAND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

## FOREST FUN FACTS

By 1899, a stage coach ran from Redlands to Knight's resort at Bear Valley. The trip up Santa Ana Canyon took about eleven hours – and the stage passengers often had to get out and walk because of the steep slopes.

Over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday in 1925, an estimated 75,000 to 100,000 people visited the San Bernardino Mountains – and almost all came by automobile.

A large flume on a trestle was built from Water Canyon to Banning in 1887 to carry lumber from a mill to the railroad. About one million board feet of lumber were used to build the flume itself. Because of this cost, the mill was abandoned, but the flume carried water to the city of Banning until 1884.

Don Benito Wilson of the Jurupa Rancho lassoed and killed 22 grizzly bears near Baldwin Lake on one trip in 1845.

Grizzly bears were common in the San Bernardino Mountains and foothills until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The last grizzlies killed in the local mountains were at Swarthout Canyon near Wrightwood in the 1890s, in Lytle Creek in the 1890s, and at Pine Bench in 1906.

Black bears were introduced from Yosemite into the Southern California mountains in 1933. The California Department of Fish and Game released six bears near Big Bear and ten in upper Santa Ana Canyon. The bears prospered and by 1979 the mountains were home to about one bear per square mile.

Big horn sheep living in the Southern California mountains have been protected since 1883. Two small herds survive today: one near San Antonio Creek and Lytle Creek, the other near San Geronio.

Prong-horn antelope were plentiful on the north side of the San Bernardino Mountains in the 1850s. They also roamed the plains near Redlands and March Air Force Base, and were hunted for sport from San Timoteo Canyon to Perris.

Mule deer populations in the San Bernardino Mountains were so greatly reduced by hunting that by 1905 they were considered potentially extinct. Regulated hunting allowed the population to rebound, although deer are still threatened by predators and loss of habitat.

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Because mountain lions prey on livestock, they have been killed since the first cattle herds were established at the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Missions offered a bounty of one bull for each lion. More than 12,500 mountain lions were killed between 1907 and 1963 when the State of California hired hunters and trappers and paid bounties for the animals' bodies. Mountain lions have been protected species since 1969.

The gray squirrel (or tree squirrel) lives in Yellow Pine–Black Oak Woodland habitat in the mountains. Similar landscaping in parks and homes in the San Bernardino Valley has allowed these squirrels to expand into suburban areas.

Beaver in California were trapped for their fur as early as 1825. By 1911 they were nearly extinct in the state. Beavers were never native to the Southern California mountains because the streams are too rapid and rocky.

In 1945, 82 golden beavers from Merced were released into the San Bernardino National Forest to improve trout streams through creation of beaver ponds, to stabilize water run-off and impound sediment, and to provide aesthetic enjoyment for recreationalists. Beavers are presently found in Cajon Pass, the Mojave River at Las Flores, Lake Arrowhead, Grass Valley Lake, Deep Creek, Holcomb Creek, Bear Creek, Fish Creek, and in the upper Santa Ana River.

Sheep grazing in the mountains was so destructive to vegetation that John Muir called them “hooved locusts.”

Henry Washington established the initial survey point for the San Bernardino Base and Meridian on Mount San Bernardino in 1852. This point was the basis for surveying land in all of Southern California.